1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Springfield

ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TOgether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed modern brick school building, and a number of stores that supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work and against which many inhabitants of this locality are always on guard.

A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washington,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. It is said that Washington's patronage is growing steadily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house, seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment that has descended upon them.

The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly, and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut securely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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Brownville

BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teachers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16] returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular members and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 342 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscel- [352] laneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
• 352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna • was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
(164) very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

• *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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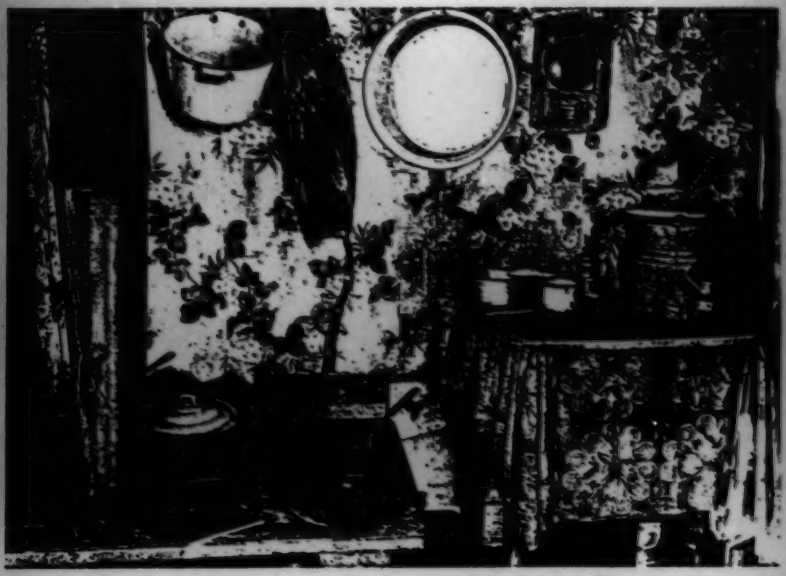

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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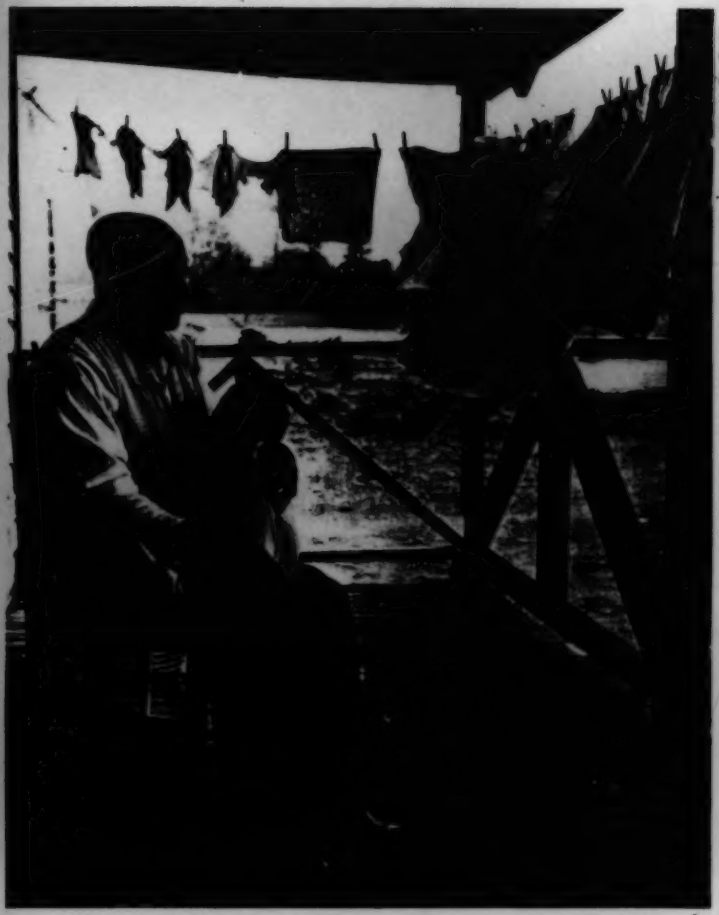
[p.26]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island



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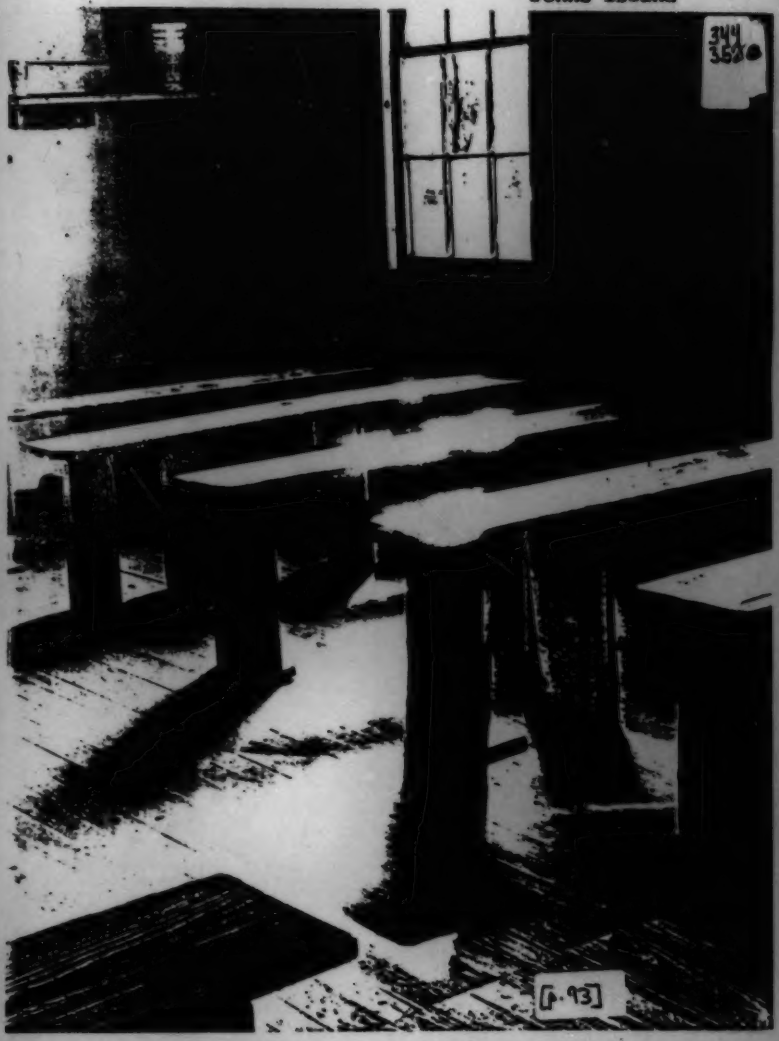
4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 97]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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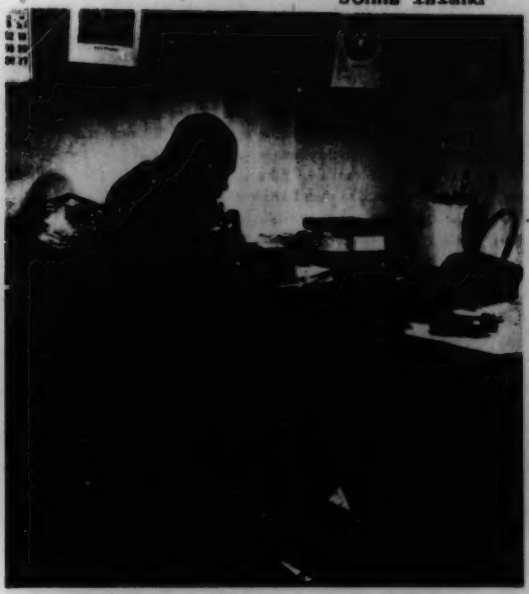

Mr. Esau Jenkins

THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(177)

And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. June Hamer

I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

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When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

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Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

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See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

567 342 (382)

tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery."

567 342 164 744

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

567 471 435

MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

567 758

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

" Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.